

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A light shielding structure of a lens barrel including an inner ring and an outer ring positioned outside said inner ring so that at least one of said inner ring and said outer ring rotates relative to the other, said inner ring and said outer ring being configured to move along an optical axis of the lens barrel without relative axial movement therebetween, wherein said inner ring includes at least one cutout portion which radially extends through said inner ring, said light shielding structure comprising:

an inner flange wall provided with said inner ring ~~to be~~ and positioned ~~in front of said cutout portion in an optical axis direction~~ at a front end surface of said inner ring;

a first annular groove provided on ~~an inner~~ a rear facing surface of said inner flange wall, said first annular groove being centered about the optical axis;

a second annular groove provided on an inner peripheral surface of said outer ring; and

a light shield ring which includes a cylindrical portion centered about said optical axis, and an outer flange portion which extends radially outwards from a rear end of said cylindrical portion so that said cylindrical portion ~~is inserted~~ extends into said first annular groove to be slidably movable relative thereto, and so that said outer flange portion ~~is inserted~~ extends into said second annular groove to be slidably movable relative thereto.

2. (Currently Amended) The light shielding structure according to claim 1, wherein said inner flange wall ~~is formed as a separate~~ comprises a member separate from the inner ring, ~~said inner flange wall being provided on a front end surface of said inner ring.~~

3. (Previously Presented) The light shielding structure according to claim 1, wherein said light shield ring is made of synthetic resin which has a resiliency such that said cylindrical portion and said outer flange portion can be inserted into said first annular groove and said second annular groove, respectively.

4. (Previously Presented) The light shielding structure according to claim 1, wherein said inner flange wall serves as a decorative member which forms a portion of a visible front end of said lens barrel.

5. (Original) The light shielding structure according to claim 1, wherein said outer ring is movable in said optical axis direction while rotating relative to said inner ring, and wherein said inner ring is movable in said optical axis direction without rotating relative to a stationary barrel of said lens barrel.

6. (Original) The light shielding structure according to claim 1, wherein said lens barrel is incorporated in a camera to serve as a photographing lens barrel.

7. (Original) The light shielding structure according to claim 6, wherein said lens barrel comprises a retractable lens barrel which can be retracted into a camera body when not in use.

8. (Previously Presented) A light shielding structure according to claim 1, said light shield ring having a generally L-shaped cross-section.

9. (Currently Amended) The light shielding structure according to claim 1, said inner flange wall being fixedly mounted to a ~~front of~~ said inner ring.

10. (Currently Amended) The light shielding structure according to claim 1, said first ~~angular~~ annular groove extending into the ~~inner~~ rear facing surface of said inner flange wall in a first direction, said second ~~angular~~ annular groove extending into the inner peripheral surface of said outer ring in a second direction, said first direction and said second direction being transverse to each other.

11. (Currently Amended) A light shielding structure of a lens barrel, the lens barrel including an inner ring and an outer ring positioned externally of said inner ring, said inner ring and said outer ring being mounted for relative rotation with respect of each other, said inner ring and said outer ring being configured to move along an optical axis of the lens barrel without relative axial motion therebetween, said light shielding structure comprising:

an inner flange wall mounted to a front end surface of said inner ring and movable together with said inner ring;

a first ~~angular~~ annular groove provided on an ~~inner~~ rear facing surface of said inner flange wall;

a second ~~angular~~ annular groove provided on an inner peripheral surface of said outer ring, and

a light shield ring, said light shield ring comprising a cylindrical portion and an outer flange portion which extends radially outwardly from a rear end of said cylindrical portion, said light shield ring being configured so that said cylindrical portion extends into said first ~~angular~~ annular groove and is slidably movable relative to said first

~~angular~~annular groove, and said outer flange portion extends into said second ~~angular~~annular groove and is slidably movable relative to said second ~~angular~~annular groove.

12. (Currently Amended) The light shielding structure according to claim 11, said inner flange wall comprising a member distinct from said inner ring, ~~said inner flange wall being mounted on a front end surface of said inner ring.~~

13. (Previously Presented) The light shielding structure according to claim 11, wherein said light shield ring comprises a synthetic resin material having a resiliency such that said cylindrical portion and said outer flange portion are insertable into said first angular groove and said second angular groove.

14. (Previously Presented) The light shielding structure according to claim 11, said inner flange wall comprises a decorative member which comprises an external portion of a front end of said lens barrel.

15. (Previously Presented) The light shielding structure according to claim 11, wherein said outer ring is movable in an optical axial direction while rotating relative to said inner ring, and said inner ring is movable in the optical axis direction without rotation relative to a stationary barrel of said lens barrel.

16. (Previously Presented) The light shielding structure according to claim 11, said lens barrel comprising a photographing lens barrel of a camera.

17. (Previously Presented) The light shielding structure according to claim 16, said lens barrel comprising a retractable lens barrel configured for retraction into a camera body.

18. (Currently Amended) The light shielding structure according to claim 11, said first ~~angular~~annular groove extending into the inner surface of said inner flange

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wall in a first direction, said second ~~angular~~ annular groove extending into the inner peripheral surface of said outer ring in a second direction, said first direction and said second direction being transverse to each other.

19. (New) The light shielding structure according to claim 1, said outer flange portion of said light shielding ring comprising a complete circular flange.

20. (New) The light shielding structure according to claim 11, said outer flange portion of said light shielding ring comprising a complete circular flange.